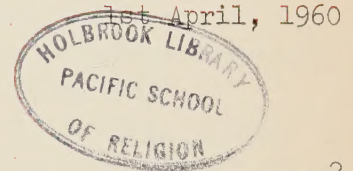


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On Other Pages

Churches Deplore South African Violence	2
More Church Groups Support Negro Action in US	3
CCIA Appeals to Eisenhower for Atom Test Controls	4
East German Bishops Condemn Forced Collectivisation	6
In Brief	8

Document

Letter from the East German Bishops to President Grotewohl	10
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American NCC Leaders Repudiate Communism and "Hysteria"

(New York) - A strongly worded statement endorsed by the heads of 24 member churches of the National Council of Churches in the USA reaffirms the Council's concern "to combat Communism" and warns against other "efforts, public or private, to subject the churches of America and their representatives to any ordeal of suspicion, innuendo and hysteria".

The issuing of the declaration by the NCC's general secretary, Dr. Roy G. Ross, follows several weeks of accusation and reply arising out of the Council's denunciation of an Air Force training manual that had accused council leaders of pro-communist activity. The US Government withdrew the manual from circulation (see EPS No. 10), but accusations have continued by some American Christian groups.

In a reference to the groups that have made the charges, the statement praises the government's prompt withdrawal of the manual and points out the danger of "private malevolence insinuating itself into media operated under government sanction".

The heads of the Council's nine other member denominations who did not sign the statement were either away from their offices or abroad.

The statement was sent to all members of the US Congress. EPS, Geneva

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Churches Deplore South African Violence

(Geneva) - A wave of protest has come from churches in many countries following the bloodshed when police fired on African demonstrators who were protesting against the pass laws at Sharpeville and Langa, South Africa.

The Christian Council of South Africa asked for a prompt government inquiry. The Rev. Basil Brown, chairman of the Council's Action Committee, said that "large-scale shooting of African men, women and children cannot go unchallenged. It is a shock to the Christian conscience of South Africa."

The Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in Johannesburg passed a resolution expressing "grave concern and regret" at the incidents.

The Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg, Dr. Ambrose Reeves, early called for a judicial inquiry. He afterwards repeated the demand in a statement issued on behalf of a multiracial "Committee of Fourteen" opposed to apartheid.

The statement cited sworn affidavits made in hospital by victims of the shooting at Sharpeville. According to Dr. Reeves the persons interviewed agreed with European observers in estimating the crowd of demonstrators at 4,000. The South African Government had set the figure at 20,000.

Two of one hundred affidavits said some African children had thrown stones, but other affidavits did not mention this claim.

Dr. Reeves said the greater proportion of hospital patients under treatment had been wounded in the back.

He emphasised that the Committee of Fourteen wanted people overseas to know that a growing number of white South Africans were shocked by what occurred.

In Johannesburg, Chief Rabbi L.I. Rabinowitz voiced the hope that the shootings might be a turning point in race relations in South Africa and that there would be "a gradual ascent from the depths to which we have now descended, to a healthier relationship more in accordance with Jewish and Christian ethics and with the will of God".

First reports from the scene at Sharpeville included descriptions of the activity of African Salvation Army workers in uniform, and of an African minister of religion, in bringing help to the wounded.

In England, Christian Action, a movement prominent in previous support for protests against South African Government policy, sent money to aid relatives and dependents of the shooting victims and called a public meeting in London on March 28.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Geoffrey Fisher, asked all members of the Church of England to support an appeal for prayer made by Dr. Joost de Blank, the Anglican Archbishop of Capetown.

In a message sent to a conference being held at Kitwe in Northern Rhodesia to consider the problems of the Federation of Central Africa, the general secretary and staff of the World Council of Churches alluded to mounting interracial tension in several countries.

Greeting the Rhodesian meeting, which has been called by the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, the WCC staff group, led by Dr. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, assured the participants of "our prayers for your conference, convened to face difficult problems at a time of racial tragedy and violence in several parts of the world, which have shocked the churches. Remembering the Evanston conviction that segregation is contrary to the Gospel, we pray for speedy removal of the causes of such affronts to humanity, wherever they occur today and for reconciliation and justice" said the message.

(The 1954 Evanston Assembly of the World Council of Churches urged the WCC's member churches "to renounce all forms of segregation or discrimination and to work for their abolition within their own life and within society").

In a telegram addressed to the Archbishop of Durban, Joseph Cardinal Frings, Archbishop of Cologne, expresses his horror at the action of the police in South Africa. The telegram reads: "Horried at bloodshed of defenceless people even including women stop I greet you and pray for peaceful solution of the problems in South Africa."

EPS, Geneva

More Church Groups Support Negro Action in US

(New York) - Two statements by agencies of the Methodist Church endorsing Christian non-violent action by students are among the most recent actions supporting the "sit-in" demonstration at segregated lunch counters in the southern United States.

The Standing Committee on Student Work of the Methodist Women's Division of Christian Service called the demonstrations a "symbol of racial equality" offering "to all Christians in this disturbed hour an opportunity for Christian witness". At the same time the committee urged every local church to clarify and make unmistakably clear its Christian position on the race issue.

The Methodist Board of Social and Economic Relations commended participants in the demonstrations for "the dignified, non-violent manner in which they have conducted themselves". The board also commended "the good professional performance of police forces which have prevented chaos".

In other action relating to the spreading demonstrations, two hundred students at Yale Divinity School in New Haven, Conn., have held a silent march around the school's campus, followed by a canvass of local landlords about housing bias. The students carried placards supporting the sit-in strikes and opposing "discrimination in the South and North".

Speaking at the dedication of Vanderbilt University Divinity School's new million-dollar quadrangle, Dean Liston Pope of Yale Divinity School declared that "a seminary must be a witness to the total Christian experience on earth" and must not be "dominated by the views that happen to prevail at the moment in its own neighbourhood".

Dean Pope, hitting at the Nashville school's expulsion of divinity student James Lawson for his part in Negro demonstrations at white lunch counters (see EPS Nos. 11 and 12), said that "I would not be faithful to my own views on the race question if I did not say that my presence here is by no means to be construed as an endorsement of the recent action of the university". But Dean Pope added that the opposition of the university students and faculty to the action by the Board of Trustees' Executive Committee had preserved the reputation of the school "among its sister institutions".

In San Antonio, Texas, where integrated lunch counter service began without incident in late March, the local council of churches reported that a series of confidential meetings it initiated were part of the step-by-step planning which resulted in an agreement by all commercial establishments to serve Negroes "with their regular courtesy".

Half of the 120 faculty members of Baptist-related Wake Forest College in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, have signed a petition urging the local F.W. Woolworth store to "serve all customers without reference to race".

At Oberlin, Ohio, students of Oberlin College have opened a drive for \$2,000 to aid 142 Negro students arrested during a sit-in demonstration in Nashville Tennessee.

As a result of the Nashville demonstrations, the executive board of the city's United Church Women adopted a statement saying, "we commend those who are taking a stand for social justice and we have faith that every church woman will support a solution that will give all of our citizens equal dignity as human beings".

EPS, Geneva

CCIA Appeals to Eisenhower for Atom Test Controls

(New York) - Dr. O. Frederick Nolde, director of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, in a communication sent to President Eisenhower, has urged that the United States should immediately declare its readiness to negotiate a final treaty on the cessation of nuclear tests where detection is now possible and to make formal arrangements for a limited moratorium on underground explosions of small nuclear weapons.

This, the communication stated, should be done on condition that the Soviet Union agrees to reasonably adequate provisions for inspection and control in areas where tests are finally banned and arrangements for international research procedures designed to devise methods of inspection and control in areas where they do not now exist.

Dr. Nolde is an associate general secretary of the World Council of Churches. He has returned to the USA from Geneva, where he conferred with heads of delegations participating in the conference on cessation of testing. The Commission of the Churches on International Affairs is a joint agency of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council.

A statement adopted by the World Council of Churches' Executive Committee at Buenos Aires early in February urged that a final treaty should be concluded to cease nuclear tests where reasonable inspection and control are now possible but that a formal agreement should also be negotiated to cease the testing of smaller underground weapons, at least for a specified period, on condition that arrangements be made for international research to devise methods of inspection where that is now impossible.

The communication to President Eisenhower claimed that "action of this kind, which would require further concessions by both sides, will obviously involve measurable risks. However, the risks would seem to be reasonable and justified because the resulting agreements would have inherent worth, serve as a significant prelude to negotiations on verified regulations of armaments and improve the possibilities for the growth of the mutual confidence upon which any substantial reconciliation of differences must depend. Moreover, these risks must be measured against the risks of failing to reach an agreement on nuclear testing."

The appeal to the President held that the Soviet Union will almost certainly not accept a treaty without some agreement on small underground tests. "Since many people at home and abroad believe an agreement on nuclear testing is of great importance and since a moratorium with an international research programme appears reasonable, the United States would be blamed for the failure. Right or wrong, it would be charged with blocking a test ban agreement for the sole purpose of developing its own arsenal of nuclear weapons. Moreover the likelihood of the actual use of such nuclear weapons as may be developed is open to question in view of the danger of nuclear escalation. If a treaty on the

cessation of nuclear testing is not concluded with reasonable permanence the developing de facto situation may force the United States into the Soviet pattern of banning tests, at least certain tests, by declaration or circumstance without provision for inspection and control. If this should come to pass, the adverse effect upon the United States' effort to secure verified regulation of armaments cannot be lightly dismissed. If a treaty on the cessation of nuclear testing is not concluded with reasonable speed the number of nuclear powers will almost surely increase and the process of negotiating a treaty with sufficiently trustworthy provisions for inspection and control will become more complex and difficult."

EPS, Geneva

Uruguay's "Christian Academy" Has Busy Summer

(Montevideo) - A new international Christian academy run for the laity by South American YMCAs on ecumenical lines reports active participation in six summer meetings.

Subjects chosen for summer courses at the Aletheia Academy, Piriapolis, Uruguay, in January and February, included "Christianity and the Philosophy of Science", "Painting and Engraving", "Natural Science" (for youth), "Music", "Choral Singing and Choir Direction" and "Dances of America". (Aletheia is the Greek word for truth).

Participants come largely from campers at the nearby YMCA Family Camp. The academy was set up near the camp so that the two could work together. Of the 100 people enrolled for the adult courses forty-two were from Argentina and fifty-eight from Uruguay. Twenty-six were Roman Catholics, thirty Protestants, ten Jewish and the rest without declared religious affiliation.

The director of the academy, which is a Latin American enterprise inspired by experiments for the laity in Europe, is Dr. Fernandez Arlt of the South American Federation of YMCAs. The project is being aided by the World Council of Churches.

EPS, Geneva

India Rejects Restrictions on Conversions

(New Delhi) - The Indian Parliament has rejected a private member's bill attempting to regulate conversion from Hinduism to other religions.

The measure had been denounced by the Nation Christian Council of India as "discriminatory" and "contrary to the spirit of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the Constitution of India".

The proposed legislation was also described in parliament by the Indian Home Affairs Minister, Mr. B.N. Datar, as unconstitutional.


EPS, Geneva

Archbishop of Canterbury Upholds Conscientious Family Planning

(London) - Conscientious family planning has been defended by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who calls it "an evident Christian duty" for parents to be "wise and controlled" in planning their families.

Writing in the Canterbury diocesan bulletin, the Archbishop, Dr. Geoffrey Francis Fisher, said that "it is wise to leave the decision as to what methods are seemly to the conscientious judgment of Christian married people".

"The important thing", he said, "is that every church should respect the honest and sincere opinion of its members and of other churches and not attempt



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to limit the freedom of others, Christians or non-Christians, to follow where their wisdom leads them. If we can thus agree, then Christians can, in full harmony, devote their united energies to teaching people to resist all temptations and allurements to extramarital vice and sin which human nature holds out and which in these days are by so many shamelessly exploited." EPS, Geneva

Church Fights to Preserve East Berlin Parish House

(Berlin) - East Berlin city authorities have announced that they will demolish the parish house of St. George as part of a plan to lengthen the showplace Stalinallee thoroughfare.

Removal of the parish house has been scheduled for April but so far the parish has not been given a site for re-erection of the building or any guarantee of compensation.

The Church of Berlin-Brandenburg has published a communiqué in the morning worship of all parishes in Berlin reminding churchgoers that the Church of St. George is "an important centre of church life" in East Berlin because it has been impossible to rebuild many church properties in the post-war period.

United services of intercession for the future of the parish have been organised on the spot and in other Berlin churches. EPS, Geneva

East German Bishops Condemn Forced Collectivisation

(Berlin) - Methods used to speed up the Communist Government's policy of collective farming in East Germany (DDR) have drawn a unanimous letter of protest from Protestant bishops there.

The protest was addressed to DDR President Otto Grotewohl and sent to parishes throughout East Germany.

"Farmers are being forced against their will to enter the agricultural co-operatives", say the bishops. "The state legal officers, the police and the state security organs are being roped in to exercise economic, political and moral pressure on farmers; and then the farmers have to make a written statement that they are joining the co-operative 'of their own accord'."

The letter goes on to say that this is an infringement of human dignity and conscience and the Church cannot remain silent, though the bishops say it is not the Church's task to decide on the economic questions involved, only on the human factors involved in enforcement of the policy.

The writers close by asking President Grotewohl to see that peace and human dignity are preserved among the German people. (see page 10 for full text)

The German Evangelical Church of the Union also voiced "serious anxiety" over implementation of the DDR farm policy at the March meeting of its Council.

A communiqué addressed to pastors of the EKU in East Germany urged them to support their members with God's Word "so that they do not give way to fatigue, despair and unbelief, but remain loyal to their Protestant faith in spite of the change in their conditions, and live like Christians".

The EKU includes the churches of Berlin-Brandenburg, Pomerania, Silesia, the Province of Saxony, Westphalia and the Rhineland.

In a reply to the letter from the East German bishops, Herr Werner Eggerath, Secretary of State for Religious Affairs in the DDR, admitted that there were

bound to be problems in implementing collectivisation. He insisted that the problems were being solved - and in the farmers' interests. Herr Eggerath stressed that the principle of voluntary membership was "an essential part of our government's policy".

A leading article in the East Berlin publication "Neue Zeit", which sympathises with the DDR Government, approves the new agrarian policy as a form of economic organisation "in which the Christian life can be lived better than under a system of private farm ownership". The paper quotes the views of some pastors who back the policy.

The Roman Catholic "Petrusblatt" and other papers also protest. Referring to government officials "Petrusblatt" says "they proclaim the separation of Church and state. They are consistently eradicating all Christian thought from the state", the paper says, "but when it suits them they don't shrink from roping in religion to support their own political purposes and quoting 'Christians' who distort the words of Christ".

EPS, Geneva

French Protestant Teachers Oppose Aid to Private Schools

(Paris) - The Protestant Teachers' Association of France has called a new law that provides state subsidies for approved private schools "unacceptable".

In a statement dissociating itself from the spirit of the new law, which the French parliament passed last December, the Protestant educators reiterate their support for the principle that "lay schooling" should be the only kind eligible for state aid.

They say that it "offers a sure guarantee of liberty of conscience and creates a climate favouring national unity".

Dissent from the new law is based by the teachers on their claim that "it gives de facto privilege only to the Roman Church, runs the risk of extending the 'school conflict' to every local community where there is a denominational school" and puts state funds too directly in the power of private or diocesan school authorities.

The statement also objects to the fact that payment of salaries to ordained teachers involves the state in remuneration of people who are responsible for conducting religious services.

The French system of "lay schooling" has been in existence for about 70 years and is generally supported by French Protestants, although there are a few Protestant schools and colleges in the country.

EPS, Geneva

German Youth Build Children's Home for Norway

(Berlin) - A "workshop" for occupational therapy of mentally retarded children has been built by a 30-member team of German youth and opened at Borkenes, near Narvik, Norway.

The 7-month building operation is part of the activity of the German "Sühnezeichen" (reparation) movement, which aims to give young Germans the chance to take part in constructive acts of reconstruction, reconciliation and understanding in areas occupied by German forces in World War II.

Dr. Lothar Kreyssig, then president of the Synod of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), in 1958 urged German youth to share in the task of "Sühnezeichen".

The new workshop provides farm facilities for the children and makes the institution eligible for state subsidy and further enlargement.

A second team from the German organisation will now begin building of a chapel at Hammerfest, also in Norway.

EPS, Geneva

In Brief

Four Hungarian theological students have been expelled from the Lutheran theological academy in Budapest by Bishop Zoltan Kaldy. The expulsion was at the request of the state which charged that the students' parents had been implicated in the Hungarian national uprising of 1956.

* *

The Hanover YMCA is arranging a tour to Israel next autumn for a group of thirty-five visitors. The group includes churchmen, students, schoolboys and girls, youth in business, engineers, secretaries, housewives and representatives of the city of Hanover and the Education Ministry of Lower Saxony.

* *

Mr. Mathew S. Ogawa was honoured in March in Tokyo by the staff of the Japanese National Christian Council's Audiovisual Centre, AVACO. The occasion was the tenth anniversary of his appointment as executive director of AVACO.

* *

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Geoffrey Fisher, speaking in Ireland on the place of women in the Church said that although women played an enormous part in the Church's life it did not follow that they should be priests. "I am quite sure that any Church which was rash enough to ordain women to the priesthood is wrong", he said and pointed out that all things which are lawful may not be expedient.

* *

The National Council of Churches in the USA has protested against the 20-year sentence imposed by a Shanghai court on Roman Catholic Bishop James Edward Walsh for alleged seditious activity (see EPS No. 12). The Council's statement, signed by its president, Dr. Edwin T. Dahlberg, expresses love and concern for the bishop and says the "action on the part of the Red China authorities is renewed evidence of the fact that Communism stands in fear of intellectual and religious freedoms, and is therefore determined to stamp out the last vestige of religious liberty on the earth".

* *

The Methodist Church in Korea, with a membership of about 45,500 and a constituency of 109,000, in the third week of March celebrated the 75th anniversary of the coming of the first American Methodist missionaries to Korea.

* *

A national conference on Children and Youth called at Washington this week by President Eisenhower and attended by 7,000 participants was addressed by Dr. Roswell P. Barnes, executive secretary of the World Council of Churches in the USA, the Rev. Philip Potter, WCC Youth Department executive secretary, Dr. Edwin Espy, associate general secretary of the National Council of Churches, and Dean Liston Pope of Yale Divinity School. The meeting was attended and led by educators, labour leaders, medical doctors, social scientists and other experts.

The Assemblies of God, a Pentecostal denomination with headquarters in Springfield, Missouri, USA, aims to open a new church for each of the 366 days of 1960. The group has averaged the formation of 290 new congregations every year for the last five years.

* *

The fathers of the Jesuit faculties of Philosophy and Theology at Heythrop College, near Oxford, England, have begun publication, with the Oxford publishers B.H. Blackwell, of a select annotated list of British books on philosophy and theology. The list, which is to cover 1958 and 1959 and will be supplemented quarterly, is meant to be a British contribution to an eventual international theological bibliography covering works appearing in many countries. The list appears in "The Heythrop Journal", a new publication giving attention to ecumenical questions.

* *

A report by the Indian government recommending compulsory teaching of moral and spiritual values in all schools and colleges in the country has been commended by the National Christian Council in an editorial in its official journal, "The National Christian Council Review". The editorial pointed out that a knowledge of the faith of their non-Christian friends on the part of Christian youth people "may help to break the isolation in which the Christian community has lived too long". The editorial added that "the system of instruction advocated in the report will make it possible for many non-Christians for the first time to learn something about the Christian faith and the Bible".

EPS, Geneva

Document

A Letter from the East German Bishops (or their representatives)
to President Grotewohl of the People's Republic (DDR)

The letter, dated March 11, protests against methods used to induce farmers to join agricultural collectives.

Dear President Grotewohl,

In view of certain measures and methods employed in connection with the socialisation of agriculture, and in our anxiety about the people living in agricultural districts, we feel compelled to place the following considerations before you.

It is not the Church's task to make decisions about economic questions connected with socialisation. But we are constantly receiving such distressing reports from our pastors and from church-members concerning the methods which are being used to force farmers to join agricultural collectives, that for the sake of human beings we cannot remain silent.

It would take us too far afield to describe these methods in detail. But it is a fact that farmers are being forced against their will to enter the agricultural co-operatives; the state legal officers, the police and the state security organs are being roped in to exercise economic, political and moral pressure on farmers. And then the farmers have to make a written statement that they are joining the co-operative 'of their own accord'. This is an infringement of human dignity and conscience. What can be expected of people who are broken by fear and despair, who accept their new position with resignation and go to work with bitterness in their hearts?

It is in your power to put a stop to such methods and to maintain respect for genuine convictions and for the voluntary principle of free decision, as confirmed at the 7th Congress of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party. It is a violation of conscience to compel people to state that they have taken a step of their own accord, when in reality they have been forced to take it.

At a time when international peace is at stake we earnestly implore you to do your utmost to ensure that peace is not endangered among our people. The desire to do constructive work in our country will remain alive only if human dignity is preserved.

Yours respectfully,

Bishop Moritz Mitzenheim of the Church of Thuringia,
Dr. Waldemar Schröter, President of the Church of Anhalt,
Bishop Gottfried Noth of the Church of Saxony,
Dr. Kurt Scharf, President of the Church of Berlin-Brandenburg,
Dr. Hans-Joachim Fränkel, Oberkonsistorialrat of the Church of Silesia,
Dr. Heinz Fleischhack, Konsistorialrat of the Church of Saxony,
Dr. Niklot Beste, Bishop of Mecklenburg,
Dr. Willy Wölke, Vice-President of the Church of Pomerania.

EPS, Geneva

